

STRATEGY
RESEARCH
PROJECT

The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Defense or any of its agencies. This document may not be released for open publication until it has been cleared by the appropriate military service or government agency.

**CIVIL MILITARY RELATIONS IN ARGENTINA.
THE WAY AHEAD**

BY

COLONEL OSVALDO LAMAS
Argentine Army

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A:

Approved for Public Release.
Distribution is Unlimited.

USAWC CLASS OF 2001



U.S. ARMY WAR COLLEGE, CARLISLE BARRACKS, PA 17013-5050

20010605 095

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

CIVIL MILITARY RELATIONS IN ARGENTINA. THE WAY AHEAD

by

COLONEL OSVALDO LAMAS
ARGENTINE ARMY

Colonel Dennis Keller
Project Advisor

The views expressed in this academic research paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or any of its agencies.

U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A:
Approved for public release.
Distribution is unlimited.

ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: COLONEL OSVALDO LAMAS

TITLE: CIVIL MILITARY RELATIONS IN ARGENTINA. THE WAY AHEAD

FORMAT: Strategy Research Project

DATE: 10 April 2001 PAGES: 31 CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

This study will attempt to analyze civil military relations in Argentina since 1983, using the Trinitarian paradigm laid down by Clausewitz. Conflicts and disagreements will be explained, external and internal factors that troubled the link between the civilian administration and the military will be sorted out. While a proper and balanced relationship within the trinity might be the answer for an improvement in the future, several other factors must be included in order to attain success. They are the lobbies or power groups, such as the human rights organizations that interact within democracies, the media, as a power that is not always impartial; and the fact that a professional military must develop a new way to communicate with society. Failure to address these factors may endanger what otherwise is today considered the proper relationship within a mature democracy.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	III
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.....	VII
LIST OF TABLES	IX
CIVIL - MILITARY RELATIONS IN ARGENTINA. THE WAY AHEAD.....	1
SUCCESS AND FAILURE, VENGEANCE AND PERSECUTION	3
DOING MORE WITH LESS?	7
NOW OR NEVER?.....	11
CONCLUSIONS.....	13
ENDNOTES	15
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	19

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FIGURE 1 (TTE GRL RICARDO BRINZONI, INTERVIEWED BY LUIS GARASINO - SOURCE SOLDADOS MAGAZINE, N 57, AUGUST 2000)	PAGE 6
FIGURE 2 (PRESIDENT DE LA RUA, DEFENSE MINISTER LOPEZ MURPHY, JOINT CHIEF OF STAFF GEN MUGNOLO AND ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF GEN BRINZONI BEFORE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS TO SENIOR ARMY OFFICERS, DECEMBER 2000).....	PAGE 11

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1 (DEFENSE BUDGET AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE GNP - SOURCE LIBRO BLANCO DE LA DEFENSA, 1999).....	PAGE 8
TABLE 2 (GENERAL BUDGET - PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION 1998 - SOURCE LIBRO BLANCO DE LA DEFENSA, 1999).....	PAGE 9

CIVIL - MILITARY RELATIONS IN ARGENTINA. THE WAY AHEAD

This study will attempt to explore civil military relations in Argentina since 1983. Since the demise of the Argentine military regime known as the "Proceso" a newfound respect for democratic normality has emerged among not only the political class but within military and civil society as well. All of them express preferences and displeasure via democratic institutions. Notwithstanding conflicts still occur. Those will be analyzed using the Trinitarian paradigm laid down by Clausewitz. The first of these three aspects mainly concerns the **people**; the second the **commander and his army**; the third the **government**.

The passions that are to be kindled in war must already be inherent in the people. The scope which the play of courage and talent will enjoy in the realm of probability and chance depends on the particular character of the commander and the army; but the political aims are the business of government alone.¹

Conflicts and disagreements will be explained and external and internal factors that troubled the link between the civilian administration and the military will be sorted out. While a proper and balanced relationship within the trinity might be the answer for an improvement in the future, several other factors must be included in order to attain success. They are the lobbies or power groups that interact within democracies; the media, as a power that is not always impartial; and the fact that a professional military must develop new ways to communicate with society. Failure to address these factors will endanger what otherwise is today considered the proper relationship within a mature democracy.

The analysis comprehends two different periods. The first is the Alfonsin administration, from 1983 to 1989. During this period while the government tried to achieve balanced reforms within the military, mainly the re-writing of the defense law and budgeting fewer funds for the military, they also brought to justice military leaders charged with human rights transgressions. "*The President decided to rely primarily on the judiciary to resolve the human rights problem*".² But when the courts, heavily influenced by local and foreign Human Rights Organizations attempted to pursue officers at lower ranks it provoked unrest within the ranks of the armed forces.³ The focus here will be the relation between the people, the armed forces and the government. Clausewitz already warned:

A theory that ignores any one of them or seeks to fix an arbitrary relationship between them would conflict with reality to such an extent that for this reason alone it would be totally useless.⁴

The second period considered is from 1989 to 1999, with the advent of the Menem administration when Argentina's foreign and security policies underwent a dramatic change. This change was based on the following assumptions.⁵

Argentina faces no credible external threats.

Economic development is the definition of the National Interest.

Since the U.S. is the single most important constraint to foreign policy in the region, it is in the best interest of Argentina to have good relations with that power.⁶

Involvement abroad as undertaken by the Menem administration was the expected policy of a *"trading state"*.⁷ This "involvement" included the decision to send two warships to the Persian Gulf (the only LATAM country to participate in the coalition). Argentina showed its firm commitment to U.N. peacekeeping operations by increasing its participation in missions all around the world. In 1997 Argentina was the seventh largest contributor to Peacekeeping Operations and accounted for sixty percent of all troops deployed by LATAM countries. More than thirty percent of the Argentine Army has U.N. Peacekeeping experience. The Congress was not consulted in any of these decisions. By doing this, the Congress, representing the people, was out of the equation, and the efforts carried out by the armed forces, while strongly supported by the vast majority, failed to achieve any advantage when new budgetary reductions and manpower cuts left the armed forces defenseless.

To some extent, Argentina is materially beyond the point of no return, not only has chosen a citizen – centric approach, but its disarmament is such that it can no longer compete for military power with its neighbors.⁸

Finally in December 1999 Argentine President De la Rua inaugurated his administration, the fourth since the return of democracy in 1983. The opportunity to restore the balance that should accomplish the proper subordination of the armed forces to civilian authorities is again present. That balance must always include the people and never again should the armed forces be deployed having made the conscious decision of not mobilizing the people. The link between the people and the armed forces had been weakened because of the suspension of the draft in 1994, changing it for the option of an "all volunteer military". The solution to be explored is the one of creating an active duty-reserve component "total army". These "Citizen Soldiers" will serve as a bridge between the active Army and the Argentinean people and at the same time reintroduce the Clausewitzian tenet into politico-military doctrine. Defense is a shared responsibility of the people, the government, and the military. The Constitution incorporated that concept into law. That is why the President is the Commander in Chief of the armed forces and the power to raise armies and to declare war is reserved for the Congress. Failure to seek

congressional approval for deployments or other employment of the armed forces sets far-reaching precedents, but had gone virtually unchallenged. The media in its role of watch –dog had never forced Congress to face its constitutional responsibility for commitment of military forces. Non Government Organizations are not “the people”, that they fulfill other aims will be proven. Moreover, when they lobby for something using all the power they can, they actually are showing their failure to represent the people. That is congressional responsibility; that is why they have been elected. When the media introduces these groups as representing the national will they are pursuing a hidden agenda, one that must be unveiled by the government.

SUCCESS AND FAILURE, VENGEANCE AND PERSECUTION

Upon assuming office on December 10, 1983 President Raul Alfonsin embarked on a historic mission: to bring members of his own armed services to trial for human rights abuses. But the courts were not the only actors involved; Congress, human rights organizations, the armed forces, and even the media played a role. During the 1983 campaign Alfonsin first made it clear that if there were trials “*they would have to be limited in scope and duration; the entire military institution could not be dragged into court.*”⁹ He proposed a distinction between the rulers of the Proceso, those who followed orders and those who exceeded the orders given.¹⁰ This amendment to the military code became known as the principle of due obedience and passed into law in February 1984. On December 9, 1985, five ex-members of the military “juntas” were found guilty of human rights violations and sentenced to long prison terms. But that was only the beginning not the end, the justices considered that all other criminal offenses were to be prosecuted; thus a new wave of trials loomed on the horizon. Alfonsin and his human rights advisors felt that the spirit of due obedience had been violated, “*opening the door for more prosecution, at the time the government expected the courts to begin closing in.*”¹¹ Pion Berlin candidly stated that

President Alfonsin was disappointed, Judges whom he had appointed, respected, and knew well would surely subscribe to the principles set forth in the due obedience clause of the Military Code of Justice and thereby dismiss charges against subordinates.¹²

Perhaps there are other answers to this reaction of the courts, not the least being the fact that justices were protective of the independence they enjoyed as members of a separate branch of government. As Gil Lavedra, a member of the appellate court that prosecuted the “juntas” stated, “*With regards to my court, we were completely aware of the fact that judgment was something we rendered alone, and that the democratic system could function only if we*

*acted with complete autonomy.*¹³ It may be so, but this distorted vision was the kind that moved the Judges to refuse to pay taxes, putting themselves above the law, and enjoying a low 16% vote of positive support from the people in a recent poll.¹⁴

Also, Alfonsin, as a former lawyer representing families with disappeared or missing members, and closely tied with human rights activists, should have known better. Human Rights organizations were pursuing their own political agenda. An agenda that even Minister of Defense Raul Borras, a close ally of Alfonsin, stated as early as April 1985,

I deny talk of an amnesty, but the country cannot remain in "aeternum" with an open wound. Democracy does not rest upon vengeance and persecution. Some day the book will have to be closed.¹⁵

This was the first public allusion to the final point, a measure that will give legal closure and give officers some assurances about the future.

But this was not the best time for Alfonsin; mid-term elections were coming up in September, and his political capital rested on the public's perception that he was unafraid to take on a powerful institution like the armed forces. Moreover there was a strong public interest in the trials of the junta leaders. The people strongly support what Alfonsin had said during his campaign, "*the trials would have to be limited in scope and duration; the entire military institution could not be dragged into court*".

Meanwhile the efforts of human rights organizations gained momentum by flooding the courts with denunciations. By the end of 1984 the number of charges filed against junior officers grew geometrically reaching two thousand six hundred.¹⁶ These organizations were fully aware that the courts would be tied up for years, yet they pushed the political envelope as far as they could.¹⁷ Vengeance and persecution was their strategy. The Judicial process in Argentina was unraveling. Defendants were immediately summoned to court as soon as an investigating judge found "justifiable suspicion" that the accused had committed a crime. In fact even when the evidence fell short of suspicion, the justices were within their powers to depose officers for questioning, simply because they had been identified by a victim.¹⁸ Those who refused to cooperate were placed under arrest, and remained in a state of suspended animation regarding their legal status and indeed their careers. They would have to wait indefinitely to learn their fate. By March 1985, the administration could no longer count on the loyalty of mid ranking officers. Horacio Jaunarena, Secretary of Defense and soon to be Minister, characterized the trials as "a disorder" that had harmed the esprit-de-corps of the Army by appearing to render a collective judgment against the institution, demoralizing the forces and affecting the defense readiness. The proceedings according to him had also endangered the constitutional rights of

individuals to a speedy trial.¹⁹ The proceedings also had a corrosive effect on the military; it was not only the trials but also the public humiliation at the hands of the media, uncontested by the government or the Chiefs of Staffs. The common answer in those days was, “*you feel yourself annoyed, file a case against the newspaper on a personal basis.*”

Finally, the president himself sponsored a bill, passed as the Punto Final Law²⁰ by the Congress on December 24, 1986, Christmas Eve. It is hard to remember a bill with such strong support. In the Chamber of Deputies (people's representatives) the vote was 126 for and 16 against. The “people” had spoken; they were back in the equation.

The human rights lobby facing the probability of an end state pushed the judges who tried to indict as many officers as they could. Again it is difficult not to agree with Pion Berlin's candid appraisal that

Unfortunately, the tremendous constraints of time forced the courts to act irrationally. When in doubt over the involvement of an officer in a human rights crime, the justices, lacking sufficient time to investigate further, erred on the side of punishing everyone.²¹

This was not a case of honest error and to prove it there are a couple of amusing cases. The first involved a murder in the artillery school in 1978 investigated by the Federal Court of Appeals in La Plata. The justices ended up indicting General Dante Cardi for the murder, even though he became Director in 1982, four years after the incident. The second involved sixteen cadets brought up on charges of committing torture while at school; six of them refused to appear in court and were issued arrest warrants. If there is one point that Pion Berlin has correct, it is that of how notoriously slow the Argentine judiciary system is. Notwithstanding in this case they were able to accelerate the indictments even when the law was passed on Christmas Eve, just seven days prior to the judicial fair, a vacation period for almost all the judges in the nation. The judges even worked extra time during their vacations to satisfy the human rights lobby. Vengeance and persecution.

The belief that more indictments would follow, coupled with the media mortification, led to the organized rebellion of junior officers against their senior commanders during Holy Week of 1987. Two more uprisings would rattle the Alfonsin government. Finally, only a few cases out of two thousand six hundred found their way to trial.

In order to summarize, the ends clearly internalized by the government, during the campaign, were supported by the people, and then Alfonsin won the election. These ends also were accepted by the armed forces, that is why no uprisings occurred until 1987, never-the-less Alfonsin failed to achieve a successful strategy. What external factors from the trinity were able to defeat it? The selected means, judiciary power, and the perception they had of themselves,

as the only sponsor of democracy, is a simple explanation. The fact is those human rights NGOs while seeking their own political agenda succeeded in misguiding the media to the perception that they were representing the people. On the other hand those charged with the representation of the people, the Congress, never confronted this misperception. There is no example of a successful politician confronting the media, being the first duty the protection of their own office, representatives voted accordingly with the people's will. And the people's will was Alfonsin's campaign statements as well as the vote for the Punto Final Law in the Chamber of Deputies (people's representatives) where the law passed with 126 votes for and 16 against. The commander and the armed forces, the last side of the Trinitarian paradigm deserves a two level analysis. First, the internal balance, and here there is no doubt that cohesive behavior no longer existed. Human rights NGOs strategically reinforced by a media humiliation campaign resulted in a sense of moral outrage amongst company and field-grade officers. They felt that senior officers had sold out to careerism and venal self-interest. But the perception that younger officers appear to have higher ideals than the senior officers could not be more wrong; when confronted in court senior officers never refused their sole responsibility in those obscure years. Second, the fact that the armed forces were convinced that the role they played as the tool of State terror had to be punished was never challenged, as General Brinzoni, the current Army Chief of Staff stated last year:

No podemos cambiar el pasado pero sí

LA POLITICA INSTITUCIONAL

El Ejército no evita ninguna de sus responsabilidades

✓ El legítimo derecho a la verdad no debe ser incompatible con el justo derecho a la reconciliación de todos.

✓ El lugar y la forma donde iniciar un largo camino de reconciliación es un espacio del que nunca excluimos a la justicia.

✓ Nos ajustamos al derecho, confiamos en la sección plena de la Justicia, pensamos en ésta u otras ideas que nunca serán sustitutas sino alternativas de los mecanismos judiciales para apropiamos a la verdad.

✓ Existe una razón biológica para acelerar la búsqueda de la verdad. Lo poco o mucho que podamos explorar está acotado también por los límites de edad de sus protagonistas.

✓ La realidad es que hasta hoy "los juicios de la verdad" parecen ser un camino estéril, sólo prolongan la ausencia de toda posibilidad cierta de llegar a la verdad.

✓ Estamos dispuestos a hacer lo que se pueda, aún sabiendo que nunca será suficiente.

✓ Pocas cosas son más difíciles aún que adivinar el futuro. Una de ellas es pretender cambiar el pasado.

✓ Queremos profundizar la política institucional

Esta es una síntesis de lo expresado recientemente sobre el tema por el jefe del Estado Mayor General del Ejército, teniente general Ricardo Guillermo Brinzoni

años, queremos retomar esa idea y darle el marco de un diálogo completo, sin hipocresías, sin objetivos desmedidos, avanzando paso por paso.

✓ Sabemos muy bien qué queremos. No eliminamos ninguna posibilidad. La peor gestión es la que no se hace; el peor camino, el que no se transita.

✓ Hemos reconocido nuestras responsabilidades. Hacerlo es como golpearse el pecho en el acto de construcción. Ya lo hicimos, el gesto institucional del general Balza fue nuestro gesto, todos acompañamos ese acto. Queremos profundizar ese camino. Queremos extender las manos, caminar juntos hacia el futuro.

✓ Debemos eliminar el resentimiento y las

sinceridad en el trato mutuo.

✓ Así como cumplimos nuestros deberes ante la Justicia, también queremos ejercer nuestro derecho.

✓ La parcialidad del recuerdo es tan injusta como el olvido.

✓ Se debe evitar que las generaciones venideras se hagan cargo del dolor y del resentimiento.

✓ Atribuyo la modificación de denominación de los "combatientes" del '70 a los "victimas" de hoy, al accionar político y comunicacional de distintas organizaciones defensoras de quienes, en su momento, llevaron adelante la lucha armada. No creo que a muchos de aquellos autodenominados combatientes -cuya acción fue objetivamente descripta por la Cámara Federal en la "Causa 13"- les cayera bien que ahora se los llame víctimas inocentes. No les hace justicia, porque, en su gran mayoría fueron idealistas que empujaron las armas contra las instituciones democráticas de entonces y luego contra las autoridades del gobierno de facto.

✓ Si bien hubo una violencia desbordada des de la clandestinidad que provocó la caída del Estado, consideramos de mayor gravedad

There was an overwhelming violence from these clandestine organizations that provoked a reaction of the State. We believe State institutional violence was a wrong answer, because the State couldn't find, within the legal procedures, how to fight and return peace to society²²

DOING MORE WITH LESS?

The Gulf War of 1990 was a watershed for Argentina's foreign policy. The decision to send two warships and a couple of cargo aircraft, (the only LATAM country to participate in the coalition) reflected the new perception of the international system.²³ Through strengthened control over the Armed Forces came a major commitment to Boutros Ghali's "Agenda for Peace." The decision to adhere to the Tlatelolco Treaty and Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), plus the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Australian Group were the chosen means to subject Argentina to the strictest nonproliferation constraints accepted by any member of the International community. All these actions cleared the path to play an active role in the initiatives tending to update the structure and functions of the Organization of American Sates (OAS). Also the Special Committee on Hemispheric Security, initially headed by Argentinean Hernan Patino Meyer, was aimed in relation to Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBM) and prevention of conflicts. On the other hand Argentina shortly after the Gulf War abandoned the nonaligned movement and completely changed its voting profile in International forums, adopting a clear pro Western policy. Furthermore, Argentina and Brazil signed and implemented agreements in relation to the peaceful use of nuclear energy allowing reciprocal inspections of their nuclear programs. Chile signed Tlateloco on August 1992. Shortly thereafter, Argentina deactivated the Condor II missile, becoming a member of MTCR, the Australian Group and the Group of Nuclear Exporters.²⁴

Argentina's firm commitment to U.N. peacekeeping operations has been demonstrated by its increased participation in missions all around the world. In 1997 it was the seventh largest contributor to Peacekeeping and accounted for sixty percent of all troops deployed by LATAM countries. More than thirty percent of the Army has U.N. Peacekeeping experience. Moreover it is the only LATAM country to be a full member of the U.N. Peacekeeping committee.

In 1997 the U.S. Congress awarded Argentina the distinction of non-NATO ally. In its relations with the United Kingdom, after the reestablishment of relations, Argentina deployed substantial forces to the U.N. mission in Cyprus where Argentine soldiers worked alongside British counterparts. Joint and combined exercises have been held annually with neighbor countries since 1995.

It appears that the Trinitarian paradigm was working at full speed. The armed forces deployed more forces, were involved in more combined exercises, abroad and in country during this period than in the previous thirty years. There is no doubt that the armed forces were successfully achieving the political aims of the State. Now the question is, who was funding it?

REFERENCIAS AL GASTO INTERNACIONAL
(En % del PBI)

1.- Promedios mundiales por regiones (orden decreciente)

PAÍS/REGIÓN	1985	1995	1996
Oriente Medio y África del Norte	12,3	7,0	6,8
Asia Central y Sudeste	4,3	5,2	5,3
Lejano Oriente y Australasia	6,5	4,7	4,6
Europa no OTAN	4,8	4,7	3,8
Africa Subsahariana	3,0	3,1	3,0
OTAN (incluye EEUU y Canadá)	3,3	2,3	2,3
Europa OTAN	3,1	2,3	2,2
Caribe, América Central y Sudamérica	3,0	1,9	1,8

Fuente: "The Military Balance 1997/98". The International Institute for Strategic Studies

2.- Sudamérica por país (orden alfabético)

Argentina	n/d	1,7	1,2 (1998: 1,1)
-----------	-----	-----	-----------------------

Fuente: nacional

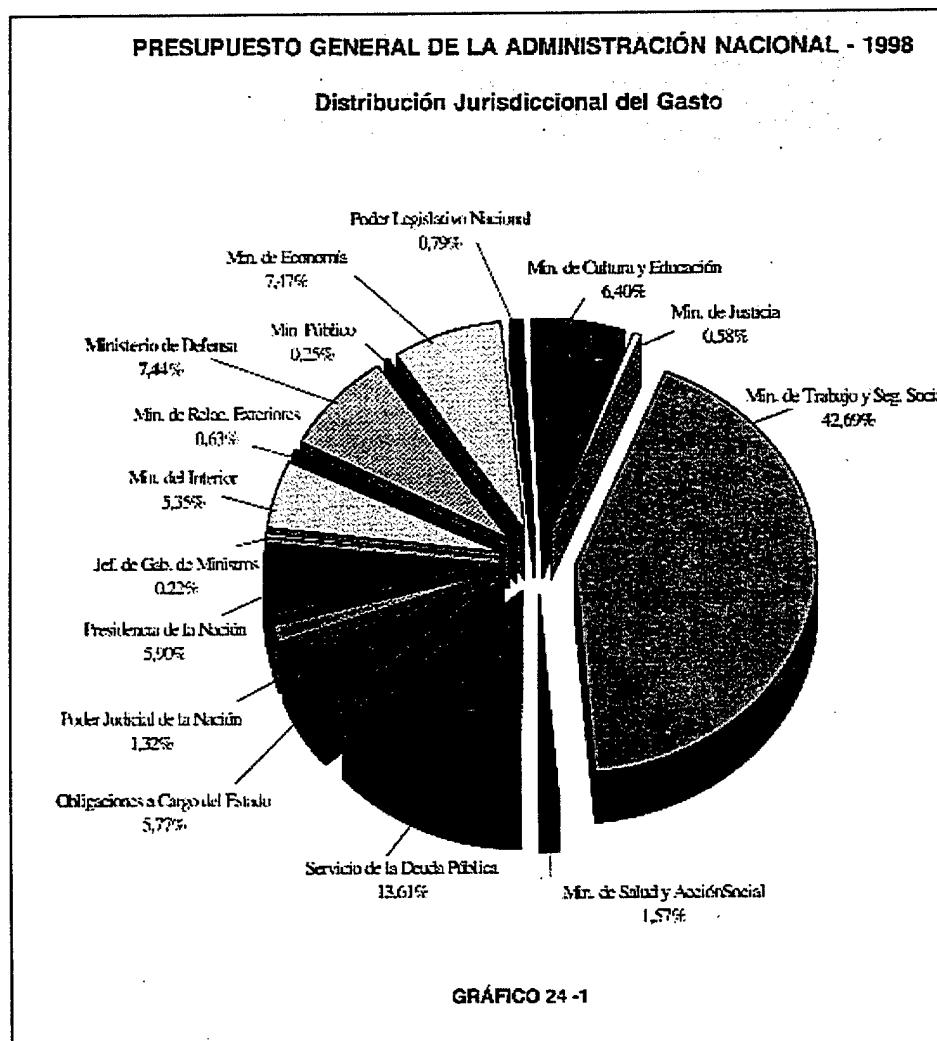
Bolivia	2,0	2,1	2,1
Brasil	0,8	2,0	2,1
Chile	7,8	3,7	3,5
Colombia	1,6	2,6	2,6
Ecuador	1,8	3,4	3,4
Guyana	6,8	1,1	1,0
Paraguay	1,3	1,4	1,3
Perú	4,5	1,6	1,9
Surinam	2,4	3,9	3,5
Uruguay	3,5	2,9	2,3
Venezuela	2,1	1,1	1,2

Fuente: "The Military Balance 1997/98". The International Institute for Strategic Studies

When it comes to fiscal resources, all organizations want more.²⁵ Carlos Menen, who assumed power after Alfonsin, sought to avert the fate of his predecessor. Under his leadership civilian strategies of confrontation with the military would simply not work. At this very moment

the defense budget would begin its deepest descent, plummeting 17 percent that year and 23 percent the following year.²⁶ How can anybody reconcile ends, ways and means in this situation? In democratic Argentina the budgeting process takes place within the Ministry of Economy where the process of allocating resources begins and ends. And it's here where all fiscal military planning and control resides. As ill advised, as this process might seem on security grounds, politically speaking it has enormous advantages. It is not simply that the economics ministry refuses to honor military requests, which it regularly does. It cannot do so by legal procedure.

The Central Bank is prohibited from financing Treasury deficits and cannot engage in any operation that would expand the money supply without the prior authorization of the minister himself.²⁷ Can the armed forces rely on Congress for any restitution? According to the Argentine Constitution, Congress enjoys the power of the purse. It may levy taxes, borrow money on the Nation's credit, arrange for the payment of the debt, and set annual expenditures for the



Nation.²⁸

But in reality Congress exerts very little control over the budgetary process, because it lacks the institutional infrastructure, its powers of authorization are a formality. Although the finance committee, during this period, was able to hold the administration responsible for inconsistencies between programmatic objectives on the one hand, and its budget on the other. This was the case with the proposal for an all-volunteer force. The congressmen believed that the funds committed in the budget were grossly insufficient to support such a force, a sentiment shared by the military. Government officials were brought in for questioning and then extra funds allocated. One success against many failures, but the potential was there. Why is it that senior officials, including the Chiefs of Staff, hardly ever make personal appearances before Congress? They neither request a hearing, nor are they invited. The indifference is mutual. The armed forces realize that when it comes to vital issues such as the defense budget, the Congress can never effectively champion their cause. The armed forces are removed from economics, separated from the Commander in Chief and President by the Minister of Defense. Economic technocrats are also distant from military reach; the armed forces have no official presence within the Economics Ministry or its finance secretariat. Finally, Congress prefers that the military retain their legislative ties (mainly through liaison officers) while restraining their collective voice. The Ministry of Defense is a player, a part of the administration itself, and they all speak the same language: economical stability, fiscal restraint, sacrifice and national priorities. They accept that defense needs cannot be ignored, but economic realities should guide the process. These are not defense bureaucrats, they are just an extension of the political establishment, and there is no defense expertise among political appointees. By denying military officers access to the budget decision process the right mix of defense and fiscal strategies is not accomplished. Moreover, this can also be done at the Defense Ministry, where the right division of labor between strategic (fiscal) and operational (defense) input should come together to inform the budget process and be delivered to the Economic Ministry before any financial decision are made. Key players such as the Chairman JCS, should be put up front to fulfill the duty as the main advisor of the Minister of Defense and the President; otherwise the perfect Clausewitzian nightmare is in effect. The government with its centralized decision making process left the armed forces "out of the loop". The commandant of the armed forces cannot seek an effective counterweight in Congress, even when relations are well routinized; the people's representatives have neither the means nor the will to provide counterbalance to the government centralization. Then the armed forces believe they are not able to fulfill their

mission. "...And let us begin by acknowledging the eternal and most fundamental element of national security: the defense of borders..."²⁹

NOW OR NEVER?

De La Rua's arrival to power fueled the perception that the hour of the brightest had arrived. Medal of Honor in high school, gold medal graduate in the university. The youngest ever Senator three times elected, a three-time representative, the first to be elected as mayor of Buenos Aires (an electoral position only after 1994). With a solid reputation as an honest man he also managed to upset everybody and failed to achieve the traditional "three month honeymoon" that every politician in power had previously enjoyed.

With the country near default in payment of the national debt, his first measure was to increase taxes; the second was to cut twelve to fifteen percent off the wages of federal employees. Massive strikes by the judicial and legislative employees rendered this last measure ineffective except for the military. Pion Berlin stated that:

...contemporary civil military order in Argentina constitutes a relation of mediated power. It is one where the attempt by politicians and soldiers to convert wants into gains occurs indirectly.³⁰

It could be argued that there was nothing "indirect" in the loss of wages, but on the other hand it was a good test to prove the maturity of military subordination to civilian control. Moreover the President himself, feeling that the measure finally was unfair to the military, said in December 2000,

The inconvenience in the application of the Decree 430/2000 showed one more time the high sense of duty of the military personnel in assuming this new sacrifice, this one added to the economic hardships you underwent in the past ten years. That is why I give my word to abolish the effects of such decree to the armed forces next year. As a man of law I must be fair, those being the first to endure sacrifice will be the first to achieve benefits.³¹

It has been argued that civilian control is a loaded term because it connotes not just a behavioral conformity but a value orientation that makes subordination permanent and irrevocable.³² Here again the armed forces showed its willingness to give away cost benefits in favor of the perception of legitimacy

Since 1995, after Congress approved the law of "Volunteer service", the armed forces began to see the slow but constant loss of reserves. Moreover, the lack of resources prevented the Armed Forces from achieving levels authorized by Congress. The small (in numbers) total strength severed the traditional link between the people and the military. This special



relationship is apparent when former conscripts, maintaining the old traditions, return to celebrate friendships acquired twenty or thirty years earlier in their aged barracks. Two solutions had already been studied, both proposed by the Army's Chief of Staff, General Brinzoni. The first is the project of Volunteers for Defense³³, a comprehensive proposal that will allow the military to overcome the shortcomings in support and logistics during deployments by incorporating technicians in Combat Service Support Units. At the same time it will provide labor to the unemployed by teaching them new skills that can be used in civilian life. The second is the expanding recruitment of officers.³⁴ The successful recruitment of reserve lieutenants from military high schools for a period of ten years (they already represent fifty percent of junior grades), is similar to the American ROTC experience. It will come in effect by the year 2002.

Structural reform is a pending subject in the Argentinean Armed Forces. Not because the military lacks the political might, but because this issue has been a constant through the different governments. The Congress must become an active player in this issue. It is not sufficient to pass a law, like the Armed Forces Reform Law, also known as Jaunarena's Law (being the former Minister and current representative the author) with overwhelming support of all political parties, if later the executive power calls for economic emergency and suspends its instrumentation. That is not to say that changes and reductions have not been carried out. The educational system being an example. The system is now fully supervised and compatible with

the Ministry of Education, the University of the Armed Forces, is a masters degree granting institution since 1994, and currently became the sixth University of Argentina to voluntarily seek evaluation by the CONEAU.³⁵

CONCLUSIONS

Military subordination to civilian authorities is no longer an issue in Argentina, what is still an issue is the proper way to develop relationships within the Trinitarian paradigm. Clausewitz said, *“the passions that are to be kindled in war must already be inherent in the people”*. The special relationship between the armed forces and the people must be preserved.

Different projects are underway to achieve this; nevertheless what the armed forces should not forget is that they are in a very real sense at the service of the people. That is the nature of the non-negotiable contract between them. If the armed forces reflects the beliefs and values of the society, it will always maintain their respect and trust.

The media has no obligation to present a balanced view of the military; they are just in the business of selling news. Some of them are not concerned with the people's interest, although some of them are, and the military should understand this.

In a modern democracy it is not the job of the military to interpret what the people's interests are. That is the government's task, Clausewitz said *“the political aims are the business of government alone.”* By filtering all aims through a macroeconomic prism during the last two decades, the military was left out of the equation.

While the world tendency reflects the same direction, expending less than one percent of the Gross National Product (GNP) in defense, for the year 2001 (after more than ten years of diminished defense budgets, without even an attempt at modernizing the military) is not a wise movement in a world order where threats are both diffuse and uncertain.

The government should no longer constrain itself by using only one factor of power. The armed forces understand the competing visions for influence and resources provided that there are such visions. There is no rational decision making if there are no visions and interests competing for resources. Government strategy must achieve a consensus of support from other elements of the “remarkable trinity”. Finally Clausewitz told us that *“the scope which the play of courage and talent will enjoy in the realm of probability and chance depends on the particular character of the commander and the army”*. Modern democracy in Argentina has assigned a very tiny scope for the talent and courage of the armed forces. It is understandable that during the first years of democracy the military still had to prove its commitment to democracy. So many times in the past they had interrupted democratic governments by transforming itself into

a political player. That is no longer the case, as Minister of Defense Lopez Murphy in the newly promoted officer's ceremony stated “...*Trust your leaders and institutions, as your Chief of Staff told you. This institution obeys the laws and the Constitution of the Nation, is subordinated to the political power and a cause of pride and reference worldwide...*”³⁶ The success of this change is definitely indebted to those senior leaders who through the years of neglect of the defense establishment were able to provide a vision of change through democratic commitment.

Word count: 4,970

ENDNOTES

¹ Carl von Clausewitz, On War, Book I, Chapter 1, p 89, (Princeton University Press, 1989).

² David Pion – Berlin. Through Corridors of Power, Institutions and Civil – Military Relations in Argentina, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997, pag 10.

³ Military defiance is not foreign to the United States. General Mac Arthur's public rebuke of President Truman during the Korean War is perhaps the best-known instance, but there have been others. Air Force General John D. Lavelle authorized secret bombings in North Vietnam after Lyndon Johnson ordered a halt to such operations in October 1968. And most recently a two star air force general was forced to retire after belittling President Clinton in public, while former JCS, Colin Powell, openly contested the President on the issue of allowing avowed homosexuals to serve in the military. See Kenneth W. Kemp and Charles Hudlin, Civil supremacy over the Military, its nature and limits, Armed Forces and Society 19, Fall 1992, 16-7. Richard Kohn, Out of Control: The Crisis in civil military relations, The National Interest 35, Spring 1994, 3, 13.

⁴ Clausewitz, p 89.

⁵ Guido Di Tella, Una Politica Exterior al servicio del Pueblo, La Nacion, November 4, 1991, 7; see also El realismo moral de nuestra Politica Exterior, Clarin, November 12, 1991, 13.

⁶ Di Tella's own, from the author of "carnal relations" one of the few identified cases in which an anthropomorphic metaphor coined by a politician serves to alienate instead to rally public opinion.

⁷ Richard Rosecrance, The Rise of the Trading State: Commerce and Conquest in the modern World, New York: Basic Books, 1986

⁸ Carlos Escudé and Andres Fontana, Argentina's Security Policies in International Security and Democracy, edited by Jorge I. Dominguez, University of Pittsburgh Press, 76.

⁹ Pion – Berlin, pag 77.

¹⁰ Marcelo A. Sancinetti, Derechos Humanos en la Argentina post – dictatorial, Buenos Aires, Lerner Editores Asociados, 1988, Apendice pp pag 185/89.

¹¹ Interview of Carlos Nino (Alfonsin's human rights advisor) with Pion Berlin, Buenos Aires, July 2 1993.

¹² Pion – Berlin, pag 87.

¹³ Ricardo R Gil Lavedra interviewed by Pion Berlin, November 9, 1994. (Gil Lavedra was educated in San Martin's Military High School, promotion 24, he didn't attained his reserve commission due to disciplinary problems. Alfonsin, De la Rua, and the author also attended the same school).

¹⁴ See La Nacion, January 5, 2001, front page.

¹⁵ La Razon, April 3, 1985, pag 3.

¹⁶ Alison Brisk, The Politics of Human Rights in Argentina: Protest, Change and Democratization, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1994, pag 71.

¹⁷ Emilio Mignone, founder of Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS) admitted this tactic to Pion Berlin. He stated that "*his responsibility as the head of a human rights organization was to carry things to their extreme, without measuring the political consequences of doing so*", Buenos Aires, November 2, 1994.

¹⁸ Carrio, The Criminal Justice System in Argentina, pag 50.

¹⁹ La Nacion, International Edition, April 28, 1986, pag 5.

²⁰ Intended as the mean to return where the government's strategy rested since the campaign, that of individual (some) not institutional guilt. So far was in danger to be lost on the armed forces, allowed sixty days limit on new indictments, those charges filed remain.

²¹ Pion Berlin, pag 99.

²² Tte Grl Ricardo Brinzoni, interviewed by Luis Garasino in Soldados Magazine, N 57, August 2000, pag 4.

²³ Ricardo E. Lagorio, Cooperative Security and Peace – Keeping Operations, in International Security and Democracy, edited by Jorge I. Dominguez, University of Pittsburgh Press, 124.

²⁴ These two last measures must be considered by far unilateral, having Argentina three nuclear power plants and the enrichment of uranium completed early in the 1970's, although the power plants run on natural Uranium. The deactivation of the Condor II missile was a measure of disarmament almost unique anywhere even considering U.S. pressures.

²⁵ Aaron Wildavsky, Budgeting: A Comparative Theory of Budgetary Processes, Boston, Little Brown and Co. 1975, pag 5.

²⁶ Pion – Berlin, pag 109.

²⁷ Decree 435, 4 of March, 1990, articles 1 and 7. Later transformed in the constitutional amendment of 1994.

²⁸ Constitution of Argentine Nation, art 67, items 2,3,6 and 7.

²⁹ Al Gore, Vice President U.S., addressing the first ever Defense Hemispheric Ministerial, Williamsburg, Virginia, July 25, 1995.

³⁰ David Pion – Berlin, pag 19.

³¹ Soldados Magazine, N 61, January 2001, pag 6.

³² Scott Mainwaring, Guillermo O'Donnell and Samuel Valenzuela, Transitions to Democracy and Democratic Consolidation, Theoretical and Comparative Issues, in Issues in Democratic Consolidation: The New South American Democracies in Comparative Perspective, Notre Dame, Notre Dame University Press, 1992, pag 309.

³³ Gen Ricardo Guillermo Brinzoni, Voluntarios para la Defensa, La Nacion, May 11, 2000.

³⁴ Gen Ricardo Guillermo Brinzoni, A partir de 2001 los universitarios podran sumarse al Ejercito, La Nacion, November 26, 2000.

³⁵ CONEAU, Comision Nacional de Evaluacion y Acreditacion Universitaria. This organization was created by law with the main objective of independently evaluating quality in high education.

³⁶ Soldados Magazine, N 61, January 2001, pag 24

BIBLIOGRAPHY

David Pion – Berlin. Through Corridors of Power, Institutions and Civil – Military Relations in Argentina, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997.

Scott Mainwaring, Guillermo O'Donnell and Samuel Valenzuela, Transitions to Democracy and Democratic Consolidation, Theoretical and Comparative Issues, in Issues in Democratic Consolidation: The New South American Democracies in Comparative Perspective, Notre Dame, Notre Dame University Press, 1992.

Alison Brisk, The Politics of Human Rights in Argentina: Protest, Change and Democratization, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1994.

Marcelo A. Sancinetti, Derechos Humanos en la Argentina post – dictatorial, Buenos Aires, Lerner Editores Asociados, 1988.

Richard Rosecrance, The Rise of the Trading State: Commerce and Conquest in the modern World, New York: Basic Books, 1986.

Carl von Clausewitz, On War, Princeton University Press, 1989.

J. Patrice McSherry, Incomplete Transition: Military Power and Democracy in Argentina, St Marty's Press, 1997.

Libro Blanco de la Defensa Nacional, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1999.

Memoria del Ejercito Argentino, Un Ejercito hacia el Siglo XXI, 1992 – 1999, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Soldados Magazine, several issues.

Clarín Newspaper, several issues.

La Nación Newspaper, several issues.